



What It Takes: PLC's From the Beginning

Garfield Elementary School
Augusta, Kansas

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School Facts

- Elementary School
- 240 Students
- South Central Kansas
- 18 Certified Teachers / 16 Master's Degrees
- State Reading and Mathematics Assessments
- School-wide Title 1

Effective Professional Learning Communities

- Solve problems thoughtfully, collectively, and continuously
- Work with what they have while inventing, innovating, and adjusting their way toward excellence
- Work to achieve the goal of “learning for all”
- Look “in the mirror”
- Collegial interchange

Fundamental PLC Questions

- What is it we want all students to learn?
- How will we know when each student has acquired the intended knowledge and skills?
- How will we respond when students experience initial difficulty so that we can improve upon current levels of learning?

What We Have In Place

- Common grade-level plan time
- Student-focused goals
- Building configuration

Collegial Staff

- Values teamwork
- Consistency / low staff turnover
- Willing & open to change
- Think "outside the box"

PLC Leadership

- Communication
- Process / organization
- Positive climate

Accomplishments

- Assistance time
- Scheduling (How do we utilize our staff to best serve student needs?)
- After-school tutoring
- Flexible reading groups

Continuing Dialogue

- Continue to analyze student achievement using data-driven dialogue
- Implementing innovative, research-based instructional strategies
- Formalize a hierarchy of interventions for struggling students

Evidence of Effectiveness

- Significant gains in local assessments from pre/mid/post testing
- Kansas assessment scores continue to increase

Finding Time for PLC's

- Before school
- After school
- Late start or early release days
- Lunch
- Creative scheduling

Friday Celebrations

- Academic Pep Rallies
- Target specific academic goals
- Collaboration with other buildings in the district



Summary Points

It's the goal of every teacher to have a classroom of students who learn, are challenged, and achieve.

Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn, DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Karhanek, National Educational Service, 2004

Celebration Friday

- 1. Parent volunteers** and staff members join grade level to supervise:
 - Mrs. Husselman's Kindergarten- Robin Ostrander
 - Mrs. McAnulty's Kindergarten- Sherrill Burke
 - Mrs. Bristow's First Grade- Lynn Warner
 - Mrs. Terick's First Grade- LyCrecia Garrison
 - Second Grade- Darla Watkins
 - Third Grade- Lisa Daigh
 - Fourth Grade- Bob Reynoso
 - Fifth Grade- Judy Schild
- 2. Celebration music** begins at 7:50 A.M.
- 3. Mrs. Christner welcomes** students and parents
- 4. Fifth grade helpers** come forward for morning announcements
 - **Today is:** "Good morning, today is: (day/month/year)"
 - **The menu is:** "The menu for today is:"
 - **The motto** for the month is: Repeat after me... "I will be _____"
 - Stand for the **Garfield Code**
 - The **Pledge of Allegiance**
- 5. At 8:00 prompt** Mrs. Christner announces our **featured guests** (High School and Middle School student athletes and club members will be dismissed by 8:15 A.M. to return to their schools)
- 6. Announcement of Class Award for** **Principal's Prize**
- 7. Fifth grade students help Mrs. Christner hand out individual student awards**
- 8. Best class in the lunchroom trophy** given to class that earned eating lunch outside by the pond with the principal
- 9. Students of the Week** (one student from each class who goes to the Dairy Queen in the afternoon)
- 10. Dismiss by class with adult supervision** at 8:28 A.M.

After School Tutoring Program Proposal

Garfield Elementary

2006-2007

Purpose: To increase achievement of at-risk students

Staff: The tutoring sessions will be staffed by 5 or 6 teams of teachers and/or Para educators. Each team will consist of 3 teachers. The teams will work on a rotating basis during the week.

Student Participation: No more than 6 students per grade level will be targeted. Students will be recommended for the tutoring program based on NWEA scores, last year's state test scores, Pathways and/or DIBELS scores, and teacher recommendation. Permission from parents would be required to attend, and parents would be responsible for their child's transportation after tutoring.

Dates/Times: The program will begin in October and end March 14. Tutoring sessions will be held Monday through Wednesday of each week beginning at 3:15 and ending at 4:00.

Cost: We would like to request a stipend of \$15 per hour be paid to each teacher that participates based on their number of hours of tutoring during the month. We would also like to provide a small snack and drink for each student before each tutoring session begins.

**Various reading and math strategies will be used to target specific skills; we will be utilizing differentiated instruction based on student need.

Garfield PLC Group Norms

- Official Meeting times—7:40 a.m.-8:25 a.m.
- Expectations for each meeting should align with the student’s Grizzly Code:
 - Treat Politely—don’t talk over, or whisper while others are talking
 - Respect Property—return items to their proper place when finished
 - Always be prepared—bring ideas and concerns for the areas of discussion
 - Create a safe place to learn—Psychological Safety—Every idea has value. If it is a concern for one, it is a concern for all.
 - Keep trying—revisit topics discussed and decisions made—Are they working? Do we need to change or adapt what we’re doing?

Items brought to PLC should be student achievement driven, not “faculty meeting” items.

- Dialogue and Discussion

The group will decide topics for dialogue and discussion one week in advance.

A time limit will be set for both dialogue and discussion items.

- Dialogue will be treated as a “receive” item.
- Dialogue will begin in small groups to generate ideas.
- Dialogue groups should change to enable everyone a chance to participate with other members.
- Small group dialogue will be shared with the larger group.

- Discussion will be treated as an “action” item.
- Discussion will be held about each dialogue item.
- Discussion will begin in small groups and then move to the larger group as in dialogue items.
- Discussion may take place at the same meeting as the current dialogue, or it may take place the following week.
- Data, options, pros, and cons are all items for discussion.
- A time-line for each decision will be made.
- The group will come to consensus about each discussion.

Professional Learning Community Resources

Building Engaged Schools by Gay Gordan

Change Leadership by Tony Wagner

Data Driven Dialogue by Bruce Wellman and Laura Tipton

Fierce Conversations by Susan Scott

Good To Great by Jim Collins

Learning By Doing by Richard and Rebecca DuFour

Professional Learning Communities at Work by Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker

Results Now by Mike Schmoecker

Whatever It Takes by Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker and Gayle Karhanek